

Testimony of Maria Cano, BSN, RN, CNOR, TNCC
House Health Policy Committee
In support of SB 605
March 23, 2010

Good morning Mr. Chair and members of the House Health Policy Committee.

You have already heard the testimony about what an RN Circulator does and our legislation. I'm also here today representing the Michigan Council of Perioperative Registered Nurses (MCORN) and myself as a surgical nurse. I'd also like to thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the nursing community in support of Senate Bill 605. My portion is to explain about MCORN and AORN and the role these member organizations have in this legislative agenda.

When SB605 was presented to the Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nurses (COMON), those present supported the RN Circulator and their role in patient safety, such as Detroit Black Nurses Association, Michigan Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Michigan Association of Peri-Anesthesia Nurses, Michigan Nurses Association and Emergency Nurses Association (Michigan Council).

Who Is AORN

The Association relies on its approximately 350 local chapters, 23 specialty assemblies (subspecialty groups within perioperative nursing, such as neurosurgery, orthopedics or pediatrics), 30 state councils and 40,000 perioperative RNs. Members can be found in approximately 6,700 hospitals and 3,500 ambulatory surgical centers in all 50 states and around the world. In Michigan, AORN represents approximately 4000 nurses and their surgical patients.

While the organization is national as well as international, it is the membership who acts as spokespersons for their nationally recognized association. Members contribute to the goals of the association through participation on committees and task forces. Through participation within chapters and specialty assemblies, members help to determine the need for specific educational topics, assist to set standards for practice, and determine, through research, evidence based practices.

AORN has evidence-based practices that sets the standards of peri-operative nursing which is used as guidelines and recommendations nationally and internationally. These standards range from ways to keep a patient warm to nursing practice providing safe patient care.

1. Consistent Standard of Care

SB 605 will provide much needed consistency of care throughout the state. This bill will make clear what **minimum standard** is required of Michigan hospitals and ambulatory surgical facilities. Almost all of Michigan's hospitals and ambulatory surgical facilities already meet this high standard because they care about patient safety. Moreover, **20 states** already have passed a form of this legislation, which means that Michigan passing

SB 605 will simply be codifying something that a multitude of states have already recognized: **RN Circulators are vital to patient safety.**

As you know, Michigan hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers are facing the same difficult economy as the rest of the nation. These facilities are constantly attempting to trim their budgets, and this cost cutting effort could potentially lead facilities to readdress their staffing requirements. Michigan's patients **cannot accept a reduction of the standard of care solely in an effort to reduce costs.** Therefore it is important that Michigan **join the 20 other states** which have already codified language substantially similar to SB 605.

According to AORN's informal research, almost every hospital in the state already provides RN circulators during surgical procedures voluntarily. They do this because they recognize the vital importance of the RN Circulator. ***This important bill will simply close a loophole*** that could significantly affect patient safety and leave the circulating position at the mercy of administrative changes.

A recent conversation with a nurse executive stated "We have great hospitals in Michigan, but times change and so do people. Right now, we have voluntary inconsistency. We know from the work of the Institute of Health Improvement that variation is the enemy of safety and quality. The requirement for a circulating RN will reduce the likelihood of medical errors, morbidity resulting from errors and the financial impact of the Never Events." It is critical to the safety of the patient from the beginning of the procedure until the end, and Senate Bill 605 does just that.